Bret and Heather 64th DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ The Data...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:10

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream commemorative edition number 60 4am. I

**Heather** 00:17

correct indeed, today we represent the perfect squares.

**Bret** 00:21

64 is indeed a perfect square. I'm something like an imperfect square. So it's sort of a yin yang kind of a thing. It is a gorgeous day here in Portland. I don't just mean nice. I mean, it is a gorgeous day here in Portland. It is, it is the kind that I imagine makes an Tifa help old ladies across the street before burning them to the ground.

**Heather** 00:43

I'm not going there.

**Bret** 00:44

You're not going alright, well, I'm not either than okay.

**Heather** 00:47

Okay, well, as usual, we have a lot to talk about. Shall I outline some of our topics before lunch before we launch in great or did you have something else to start with?

**Bret** 00:58

No, I think well, maybe we should just mention that. Greg gutfeld. Gave us he did a best of 2020 lists on his locals page. And he awarded the Dark Horse podcast, the best podcast of 2020, which is amazing. Thank you, Greg. If you're out there, we really appreciate that. He gave Eric the 2020 canary in a coal mine award. I don't know there was an avian category. Maybe next year, we will get the plain brown Raptor award or something like that. That would be cool. But yeah, I thought that was a you want to show that guy. You do have a screenshot. Yeah, there you go. So he calls us retro.

**Heather** 01:43

The most retro but also relentlessly engaging. And I am I am your Heather. Hi. Yes, yes. Hi, Heather. Hi, there's some actually wonderful typos.

**Bret** 01:51

There are some wonderful there that one is particularly particularly really good. And I will say Greg, that actually we will not relent, we will attempt to engage, you know, from here on out. Really? Yeah,

**Heather** 02:03

absolutely. Yep. Okay. All right. Perfect. So yes, thank you. Thank you for that. Okay, so we're gonna talk a little bit about, you know, the US for those of you in the United States, which is most viewers and listeners, I believe. We got a new president this week, and we're going to talk a little bit. All that. Yeah. You noticed? Yes, I did. Yeah. So we're going to talk a little bit about some of the things he's, he's done so far, and discuss one of the major magazines in the United States jumping the shark, and investigating just at the anecdotal level, how different businesses might survive a lockdown or a series of lock downs of this length, based on some conversations that I had this week in in Portland. We're going to talk just a little bit about what was happening at pauwels, Portland's massive, amazing independent bookstore, and what it suggests about how things get reported. We are going to revisit Unfortunately, the question of tech censorship, because there is there has been new new stuff happening this week. And finish by speaking just a little bit about the advice of some doctors to quote trust the science, they say the data is sick, phenomenal.

**Bret** 03:24

That sick is si si si saying that you are simply quoting their error rather than making it Yeah, so

**Heather** 03:31

actually, the sick is in reference to the is our distinction. The data are phenomenal is what they meant, but they'd still be your brawn.

**Bret** 03:40

Right? Yes. But at a different level and a different differently wrong.

**Heather** 03:43

Yeah. All right. So we've got a new president. Yes, we do have a new president here, the son on Wednesday to somewhat less fanfare than would be absent a pandemic, of course. There were there were speeches. And then shortly after he he got right down to it, and he shut down the Dakota Access Pipeline double.

**Bret** 04:05

Wait, wait, you're gonna skip right past the inaugural?

**Heather** 04:09

That's what we talked about doing wait for it, or no, I

**Bret** 04:11

think we need to mention this. This speech was, was given quite a number of fascinating accolades. People were very jazzed on the speech. I was somewhat less jazzed on the speech. I didn't see the whole thing because I decided to play a little drinking game where every time Biden said unity, I would take a drink, and I made

**Heather** 04:30

it. That's why I found you on the floor.

**Bret** 04:31

That's why I was passed out there. But others thought the speech was excellent. I think we have a quote here from john Heilemann. Zack, could you put that up on the larger screen, if you would? That's good enough. JOHN Heilemann said, there was a lot about the speech that was sorry, it may have been the best speech Joe Biden has ever given. It wasn't him. It was important in that it was not a political speech at all. It was a speech that had a much higher purpose than that. And I don't want to go overboard and compare it to Lincoln's second inaugural, but aspirationally that's where it wanted to live. And then he added, actually, fuck Lincoln. No, he didn't know he didn't. That was humor. But anyway, yes, this comparison to Lincoln's second inaugural, which is, of course, where the famous quote about the better angels of our nature comes from is completely inappropriate and preposterous, although maybe not hard to understand in light of President Trump's This is now my opinion, President Trump's appalling speaking style. And where you always had the sense that he was lecturing you about something he had learned in a briefing 10 minutes ago, were not learned, right or not completely learned. But in any case, yeah, Biden's speech was, it was competent. And given how many gaffes we saw on the campaign trail, it was maybe much better than it might

**Heather** 05:58

have, there was no doubt a return to the tone of statesmanship.

**Bret** 06:02

It was a return yes to the high production values of the blue team. But also, I would say the degree to which unity was invoked so regularly and has been so weaponized since the election. I just find it kind of appalling the abuse of that term, and I can't help but take it a little bit personally.

**Heather** 06:26

So that said, he shut down dapple, which, you know, very good, very good job. He reentered the US in the Paris Climate accord. Awesome. Very, very nice. He reestablished ties with the who the World Health Organization utterly necessary, even even for those of us who have been skeptical about some of the politicization that the who was engaged in and he signed this executive order on preventing and combating discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. Cool. Wait. Not cool. Not cool. Yeah, not well, let's just read the first paragraph. Good. Okay. Zach, you can show my screen. This executive order from the day of the inauguration January 20. On as I said, preventing and combating discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. Excuse me, By the authority vested in me as president by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America is hereby ordered as follows. section one policy, every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear, no matter who they are, or whom they love. Children should be able to learn without worrying about whether they will be denied access to the restroom, the locker room or school sports, adults should be able to earn a living and pursue a vocation knowing that they will not be fired, demoted or mistreated because of whom they go home to, or because how they dressed does not conform to sex based stereotypes. People should be able to access health care and secure a roof over their heads without being subjected to sex discrimination. All persons should receive equal treatment under the law, no matter their gender identity, or sexual orientation. That first, Zack, if I may, thank you, that first sentence. Even just the first two phrases, the first sentences of this executive order, every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear is a completely honorable sentiment and exactly not what this executive order then proceeds to do. What it proceeds to do is prioritizes the demands of a very, very tiny minority of people over that over the rights the established legal rights of half of the population. Since when is this what democracy looks like?

**Bret** 08:47

Well, the problem of course, is that you can read that in two different ways. And it is in fact, I would argue designed so that we will read it into different ways that it is a signal to those who are looking for a particular change in the law while appearing to subscribe to values that all decent Americans hold. And the problem is that there is a an actually difficult balance that needs to be struck between providing people the liberty to do things like transition to the gender that they feel, while protecting people who have a right to be protected, which is to say, women and so these things, it is not clear how to strike that balance, and it is certainly not going to be a simple matter. But in doing it this way. They have effectively chosen sides while leaving the option to declare themselves completely concordant with the values that we all share

**Heather** 09:53

the rest of the executive order with one notable sentence is pretty anodyne, right? It just it's it's just it's fairly generic and exactly as you You say it leaves them open to declare later? Oh, that's not what we meant, oh, we didn't see this eventuality coming. We couldn't have seen what was downstream of this. And of course they can.

**Bret** 10:11

Right? It's perfectly clear that in extending, effectively extending rights to trans women, these are people who are born male who transitioned to female, that they are encroaching on the rights of women to be protected from men in things like sports competition, and more importantly, in cases like when they are sent to prison,

**Heather** 10:41

prisons, crisis centers, halfway houses, places, places, that are single sex for the explicit reason that women are a protected class. And this has never before been a class to which you could simply declare yourself, I am now in that, and the vast majority of what you know what I will continue to call the truly trans people and no, I don't have a magic magic eyesight with which determine at first glance, you know who that is. But I will say that the truly trans people represent I am certain a small fraction of the people who are currently masquerading as trans. And you know, this, we of course, want to protect the rights and the health and the safety of truly trans people. But doing so in a way that is easily gamble, and will be gamed, and allows those many people who are interested in cosplay to, to come into women's spaces is frankly horrific. And I don't understand how anyone who has claimed to be interested in women's rights, or protections for women, or a feminist or any of this, I don't see how anyone and I am sure that Biden and Harris both identify with those sorts of identifiers. Can can be in favor of this, if they have thought even you two steps down the road?

**Bret** 12:08

Well, I don't even think they are in favor, but I think they are playing politics. And there is a large segment of the population that can't track multiple competing values simultaneously. And so there's a script that basically says, you know, if you're a good person, you're in favor of protecting trans people. And I would agree with that, but protecting trans people, if that's all you see, at that moment, at whose expense and just just to make this perfectly clear, why are women a protected class? And why does that protection need to be maintained, especially in light of all of the gains that women have made? Well, let me explain it this way. I like to that one. Yeah. I'm just having a little conversation. Let's say you want to get some coffee or something your route for you maybe? Sure, that'd be great. But let's think about it this way. A basic biological level, right? Nature has not it has been balanced in some ways, but it has been unfair to women in the sense of rendering them vulnerable. You know, there's the obvious fact of males on average being bigger, but there is the slightly harder to, to grapple with fact of the sexual asymmetry between men and women, which is to say, men are in a much better position, physiologically to rape women than women are to rape men. Right? Right. A woman raping a man is a difficult thing for her to accomplish, even if that's what she is desiring to do. And the advantages

**Heather** 13:42

that bad men will take of women are well understood, well named, everyone is familiar with them. And they are universally understood by all but the reprehensible few to be appalling, and, and disgusting. The power that bad women have over men is less well understood, has fewer names associated with it, and it doesn't tend to it is not nearly as likely to end in violence or unwanted pregnancy for reasons.

**Bret** 14:09

Yes, and men, you know, they may not always resist bad women as they should, but they at least have that power at their disposal, whereas a man can overpower a woman rape her and as you point out where I was going to go next is the simple ability to potentially inflict a child on someone, right? That is a biological asymmetry. Now it's reduced for people who might avail themselves of, you know, family planning technology. But nonetheless, the the ability of you know this asymmetry between what a man can do to a woman and what a woman could do to a man, his justification in and of itself for protected spaces where women don't have to worry about people with male genitals and gonads and the idea that we are somehow in an effort to be good to a small number of people who are involved in a gender transition, that we are going to open a loophole, you know, well, no man would exploit that. Really, an unscrupulous man wouldn't choose.

**Heather** 15:20

You don't even need to go to have you met men. Have you met people? Of course, people? Well, you know, meerkats, would, giraffes would this, you know, this is what social organisms do. Some number of individuals in any social system, be they humans or dolphins or rabbits will game the system. And, you know, create a system that is game a ball by executive order, and you're going to get a lot more of it,

**Bret** 15:44

right. And, you know, an executive order like this, well, if it doesn't draw a, you know, in order to protect women in sport, right, let's just agree that that would be the right thing to do, because there are major physiological differences that advantage people born male. But if your executive order doesn't recognize that there's a problem when it comes to prisons, and that a man sent to a men's prison for a sexual offense, who suddenly decides that he's trans and prefers to be in a women's prison, cannot be humored. And in fact, there are multiple examples of men who have done this and then gone on to, to assault women. So

**Heather** 16:25

now it doesn't mean it does the actual manifestation seems to be mostly at head of agencies, you know, so federal, federal agencies. And I do feel like it opens up a whole lot of possibility for downstream, but I'm not sure. I'm not sure, for instance, what the effect of this executive order specifically would be on federal prisons, obviously, on private prisons, it has no direct effect. I'm not sure about federal prisons, because they're not agency love. Well,

**Bret** 16:52

I'm not sure, actually, that there's a distinction between the private and the publicly funded prisons, because the question is the rights of the prisoners, you know, they're sentenced in a in a public context. And so it doesn't say that the avec executive order has an effect on prisons, but it signals a belief in a principle that obviously is insufficient to deal with the situation. And so are they going to reverse course on this and say, yes, this is true equal protection, except when it comes to prisons? No, that's not very likely. It's not

**Heather** 17:25

very likely. And so they're effectively asking the populace to buy into a fiction. And the more fictions that people buy into the more of that cognitive dissonance that they're that all of us are asked to participate in, the more fractured our cognition gets, the less capable we are of having a coherent worldview and building it from first principles. And you're more likely once you know, once you've accepted some number of these just, you know, just lies about what reality is, you're more and more likely to say, you know, whatever, I accept it, I'm going to go along with it, because you appear to be feeding me something that's consistent in your worldview. And I don't know how to make sense of it.

**Bret** 18:06

Yeah. So you know, we've seen a number of these signals about direction and we've seen them all delivered in roar shock form. And I think, you know, actually, I don't know if this is the place to introduce it. But I did a discussion with James Lindsay and Jesse single, and there's a segment of it that keeps coming back up and Jesse has expressed frustration that he keeps being drawn back into discussions about am I don't wish to draw him back into a discussion.

**Heather** 18:40

Okay, so can we just, there's a more natural place to go there I can we can we do the next thing first. If I if you were going where I think you are. There's there's one more sentence in the executive order that I wanted to bring up, which is you don't have to show my screen, Zach. It is, for example, transgender, black Americans face unconscionably high levels of workplace discrimination, homelessness and violence, including fatal violence. Now, early in the summer, when the protests and then the riots were beginning to become regular parts of life in Portland, and many other cities around the US and even the world. We pointed out here on on this podcast, that there was at that point on the Black Lives Matter homepage, a strange focus on what what we suggested with a strange and unusual notable focus on black trans lives black trans lives. Matter of fact, there was a there was a an organized rally for black

**Bret** 19:36

ager demonstration, the second major one in New York.

**Heather** 19:39

Yeah, so black trans blacks, what what is it about black trans, like, why this intersectionality in particular. And, you know, there's there's a lot to do there. And I'm not sure this is where we want to explore that, again, but unconscionably high levels of workplace discrimination, homelessness and violence is the claim. Well unconscionably high levels is of course A wiggle term that you could claim unconscionably high levels is any level and therefore any any violence against pick your group filling your group here is unconscionably high, in which case this is this sentence means nothing in which case why included and what what they seem to be doing is signaling that they are making some kind of egotistical argument without actually having done so. So they provided cover for themselves as as you would, if as you would if you had no data, I really want to see the references I am so tired of seeing this claim. black trans lives are the ones who are the most threatened, there is an epidemic. And, you know, there are what 400,000 deaths in America that have been attributed to COVID at this point, and I didn't pull up the numbers but something in the dozens at the most of trans people murdered in the US last year, which is you know, the thing that is evidence of the epidemic of violence and hatred against trans lives and often specifically black trans lives and you know that that many lives taken inappropriately terribly etc. is does not a pandemic make no no it does not. It's it makes you wonder who is served right? Like who who wins with this kind of rhetoric? And here? Here's where I think we can segue to what you were going to talk about here. So Andy, no, no, our friend also someone who will talk about a little bit later with regard to the the pals dust up, who is a Portland based or was in Portland for, for his whole life based journalist who focuses on revealing what an Tifa is actually up to and of course, has drawn the ire of of them many, many times and sometimes public ways. A couple of years ago revealed the fabrications behind the then ubiquitous claims, it seemed that there was widespread street violence against trans people in Portland and Seattle. And I remember following this at the time, I think it was 2018. But actually Katie Herzog and Jessie single in their podcast blocked and reported, we're talking about this this week. And they were talking about the the good work that Andy know, did specifically on revealing that, a, there was a clear financial incentive for such people to claim that they've been assaulted, because in almost every case, there was an immediate GoFundMe set up with several $1,000, accruing pretty rapidly to the person who had supposedly been assaulted. And there was a complete lack of evidence there were never any police reports. And of course, people hide behind, you know, all cops are bastards, all of this, but, you know, no evidence, financial incentive, Gee, I wonder if this is perhaps a an epidemic of, you know, violence against trans people on the streets of two of the most progressive cities in the country. That is actually a fiction. And Andy certainly found evidence suggests that that is that it's likely what serves also to do though, is not just enrich the individuals who are making those claims, by lining their pockets with GoFundMe money. But it also further creates this culture of fear and anger, which allows, you know, Blue team and red team to go farther and farther apart and look suspiciously at each other, sometimes armed from ever greater divides.

**Bret** 23:26

Yes, and, you know, at some level, the, the category is on a saleable, right? Why is it that black trans lives are somehow at the top of the stack? Well, this comes from intersectionality the idea that there is some sort of emergent nature to the overlapping oppressions that someone experiences that, you know, the, the oppression of, you know, a black gay person is more than the sum of the oppression of black and gay. And no doubt there's some truth to that, but you can't base policy on that. And what's more, you can't open a loophole based on it and expect nobody to cynically go through it. Right. So, you know, at some level policy has to be colorblind, right? It is the blindness of the law, that is its genius, and all of these things that say, actually, we can do better than blind, we can enhance it to protect this group, and that group and the other group, all of these things are an invitation to gaming, except in cases where as we discussed at the top here, you know, these things are objective, right? I am female, therefore, certain things inherently follow. And so anyway, we just got to stop being stupid about this. If you open a loophole, there will be people who use it to game the system. And the law has to be robust to that it has to not allow it.

**Heather** 24:53

Yes, no, that's that's, that's absolutely right. And did you want to then say something about

**Bret** 24:59

well, I want To clarify something without, you know, Jessie has Jessie single has explained that he doesn't want to be dragged back into this discussion, while dragging me back into it. But nonetheless, I do think it makes sense to put off the discussion of who was right in our, in our argument until there's more information. But I want to make clear what my position is and isn't because it gets caricature. The position that I laid out was,

**Heather** 25:28

this is the position that you laid out and one of the Unity campfires with Jesse single and James Lindsay back in, I don't know where it would have been August or September maybe.

**Bret** 25:36

I think it was later than that. It was pretty pretty late in the election cycle. But in any case, Jesse suggested that the term equity didn't mean anything like what James and I thought it meant. And I said something dismissive. Like you just wait and see. equity is a very special term. Now. You will find equity in the executive order, you will in fact find, I believe, a definition of equity, which is unusual and a positive sign. But

**Heather** 26:10

the in the ER, you think,

**Bret** 26:11

well, it was certainly it certainly came out of the Biden administration, if it's not in the EEO, it's somewhere else in the documents that became visible in the first couple days, the word is here, but there's no definition. Okay. In any case, the position that I want to be held to is this, it is not that equity means one thing or the other is that equity is a motte and Bailey, and that what we should expect, is to find evidence on both sides. equity is simply what we would expect it to mean, based on common parlance, something very close to equality, or equity is a magic term that allows all sorts of reorganization of who's, who's up and who's down, based on a desire to equalize outcomes, and that is the thing over which we are really fighting. So yes, in the end, the fact that there is evidence, this week of the Biden administration taking a very standard view of what equity is the idea that it's basically equality, that is to say, equality of opportunity. And the fact that there is evidence this week that equity means to them some sort of equalized outcome, those are both present. And that is exactly what one expects, so that is to say, the safe version of the term, right that it is effectively equality of opportunity. That's the mot. And then the Bayley is the much more the enhanced, powerful, weaponized version of the term. And so in any case, the real question is, what will the policy look like? Yes. forestall one other thing that I'm certain is coming down the pike, I am not saying that the Biden ministration. is secretly super woke. I don't think they are, I think they're cynical as all hell. And what that means is that they are going to attempt

**Heather** 28:09

I mean, so are all the corporate brands who are who are going, you know, balls out on the woke advertising, they're not the people in the, you know, in in the big offices do not actually believe this stuff?

**Bret** 28:25

Well, I think that answer is more complicated. I think people talk themselves into some stuff.

**Heather** 28:32

But it's the it's the rank and file among, you know, the recently graduated from crazy college programs who were bringing it in, and who are the true believers? Well,

**Bret** 28:41

I would say they bring it through the door. There's a credible threat wielded under these terms and management, which may not inherently gravitate to these things, then rationalizes them into their belief structure, but they may actually in some very meaningful sense, believe these things before it's all said and done. Yeah. Nonetheless, I want to say the the question, my expectation is that equity intersectionality, critical theory, all of these things will be signaled, they will be used to establish a partnership, which I believe the DNC and the Biden administration will engage in, without a core belief, but the prediction is, they do not know what they're partnering with. They don't understand its power, and they will not be able to control it, and therefore it will end up transforming the landscape more than it already even has. That said, I think it is very important, and I did this with Trump also. But it is very important to give the new administration the benefit of the doubt, and to let them you know, surprise us in the positive. Absolutely.

**Heather** 29:52

Absolutely. So actually as per your your discussion there of the two different than the Martin Bailey use of these terms. Arms, which is invisible to people who aren't aware that there are two definitions. There was this Washington Post article from a few days ago as I can just show my screen very briefly so people can see what we're talking about Biden selects transgender Dr. Rachel Levine as assistant health secretary. And I'm going to read just the second paragraph before you give me my screen back. Dr. Rachel Levine, this is Biden's words a statement, Dr. Rachel Levine will bring the study leadership and essential expertise we need to get people through this pandemic, no matter their zip code, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability and meet the public health needs of our country in this critical moment and beyond. Biden said in a statement, quote, she has a historic and deeply qualified choice to help lead our administration's health efforts. And farther down the article, we have her saying now not she is not saying what she is intending to do. But she's talking about her work in Pennsylvania. She says I am proud of the work we have done as an administration to address health equity. And the work I have done personally to raise awareness about LGBTQ equity issues, she said, to which, you know, I asked, which is it? You can't have it both ways here we have these two things right next to each other in an article and a single article from Washington Post. Are is this person going to serve all Americans regardless of demographic marker? Or are they going to be working for equity, which explicitly centers the demographic markers and seeks redress for differences in outcomes, which is regardless of demographic marker, as Biden says, or focusing on demographic markers, as she implies, you can't have it both ways, regardless or focused, regardless, are focused. I really hope it's regardless, those are his words, those are Biden's words. There is nothing in what I have found of what she has said in the past Levine, the new assistant health secretary, so suggest that there is going to be in any regardless here.

**Bret** 32:04

Well, also there is the fact of her nomination to the post, which I will say would be striking under ordinary circumstances and appears to be very questionable in the midst of a pandemic that is bringing us to our economic knees, among other things, that this, you know, it is obviously possible that she is the very best person for that post at this moment, and just happens to be trans. I don't see any evidence to that effect. So one has to imagine that even in the midst of this pandemic, the choice was made to signal something about gender identity, rather than figure out whoever the top person for this post would have been on the merits. And that is a very disturbing sign.

**Heather** 32:56

And I'm going to go full turf here. Okay, and then you're going to riff a little bit on what that means. wapo in an article from four years ago, this is 2016 at the point that she was appointed in Pennsylvania, meet a share this just briefly, Zack, meet Rachel Levine, one of the very few transgender public officials in America. And this is from June 1 2016. This is this is while Obama was still president. In this article, we have Levine being revealed as having some traditional markers of femininity, apparently quote she favors chunky necklaces and Earl Grey tea and is in constant motion. But later in the same article, Levine does not discuss whether she took hormones or had surgery calling it a private medical matter you can't actually change your sex. If you're a mammal It's never happened you can change the presentation the way that you appear that is gender in order to be welcome in some female spaces there is no way that self ID should be sufficient and claiming that the actual hormonal and surgical changes which do not get you all the way to changing sex, but get you into a position of actually in my mind being transgendered. If that's private, and all you have to do is wear chunky necklaces and drink Earl Grey tea to be considered female and then now we've got this female person as assistant health Secretary well that's you know, chalk one up to feminism. No, this is this is backwards land in so many ways. And this is yet another one of these places where people who aren't thinking too hard about it sort of see this scope. What Okay, okay, I guess Oh, no one knows if this person is even on hormones of the sex they weren't born to or has had any surgery, maybe they're just drinking tea and wearing necklaces. And that's enough to get them call the woman didn't know so easy.

**Bret** 35:13

Yeah, it's a it's an amazing feat. So you describe yourself as having gone full turf? Yeah. turf. For those of you who have been living under a rock, it means it's it's an acronym, trans exclusionary radical feminists. And my contention is that we can prove that that's not actually a thing. Awesome. And here's how we can do it. One says certain things in the public sphere, and this accusation comes back, you and I have both had it hurled at us many, many times, and we know many other people who have as well. What one needs to do in order to have that term hurled at you is espouse a belief that simply saying that you are of one gender or the other is not sufficient, and that some people will if you say that it is sufficient, if that's the standard, you legally adopt that there are those who will game the system, and already are. And if you say those things, you will be labeled as a trans exclusionary radical feminist, which is an accusation Akin in some circles to being called, for example, a racist, right? It's a it's clearly understood to be a kind of bigotry. But here's the problem is if those are the only things that you need to believe in order to be in this category, then you don't need to be trans, exclusionary, right? You don't need to be radical, and you don't need to be a feminist. As a matter of fact, if you just simply believed what pretty much everybody believed 1015 years ago, you'd be right there in turf land.

**Heather** 36:56

Plenty of conservatives, this was your point to me earlier, plenty of conservatives have the same sense of like, when did we stop not understanding biology? And many conservative people would not call themselves radical feminists, right?

**Bret** 37:10

Just simply traditional view of gender roles, which isn't where you and I come from?

**Heather** 37:14

Well, they may have a traditional right view of gender roles, this this just requires actually nothing about gender roles. It requires understanding biology well,

**Bret** 37:25

right. You could come there from biology, you could come there from, you know, just simply having a belief in traditional roles that are you and I would say are antiquated, but any of those things are good enough to get you through the door. So the point is, none of the letters in the acronym are required to be in the category. It's a special category. It's like equity. It's a magic term. Yeah, in this case, what that magic term is doing is it is standing like a buzzsaw on the side of an argument space. And the idea is, you are limited to certain arguments. But if you make any of these other arguments, then we're going to shove you into that thing to shove you into the biggest saw. Yeah, and at some level, we have no choice but to stare this down, turf isn't a thing, just because a group of people have decided to equate it with bigotry and then accused people of it as they find convenient, doesn't make it true. It doesn't create any validity. And what's more, we can tell it's invalid, because even by its own definition, it doesn't add up because there's so many people in the category who are none of those things.

**Heather** 38:27

Yeah, well, I mean, I do feel like there's a way in which we're living in an age of legitimized epithets against women, you know, turf, Karen, I like the you know, these these are epithets pure and simple. But of course, you know, those are the two that come to mind and there's plenty that are hurled at people regardless of the of their sex, you know, the fact the fact that you can be a Nazi for, for saying that equality of outcome is not a legitimate goal is is rather remarkable, and it acts with that same kind of buzzsaw.

**Bret** 38:58

Yeah, I agree. It's a general form of argument. And you know, there are variations on the theme. I would say, even max Candy's formulation about there is nothing. Everything is either racist or anti racist. And therefore, if you can't say that something is anti racist, well, we know what category it's in. Yeah, I mean, that's a very special form of logical argument. By the way, Dr. Candy if you are watching and I hope you are, we can also prove very simply in a way that every single person who hears it will understand why it is the correct logical formulation, we can prove that your contention that there is no non racist that there is only racist, racist and anti racist we can prove that that is incorrect. And I would like to offer you if you'd like to come on the Dark Horse podcast I'd love to have you on. You can outline your position I will outline my challenge to it and We can see which argument wins out.

**Heather** 40:05

All right. Should we move on?

**Bret** 40:07

Yeah, let's do that. All right.

**Heather** 40:11

Here we have, Zack, if you will show my screen this is the guardian. Rolling Stone seeks thought leaders willing to pay $2,000 to write for them. This is I think Rolling Stone, one of one of the most important journalistic outlets actually of, of at least the late 20th century, jumping the shark. This is truly remarkable, actually that they are willing to have pay for play content masquerading to anyone but careful readers as presumably next to their normal content, although it's not totally clear from this. And Zack, yeah, I think you their magazines have a long history of establishing and your women's magazines have a much harder time with us historically, where advertisers have declared themselves privy to making decisions about editorial content on the same page where ad show but other than women's magazines. Typically, these journalistic monthly and weekly magazines have a kind of firewall between content and advertisers and rollingstone is saying no, no firewall paywalls are fine, but no firewall, right? Like we are, we are not going to any more protect our readers from from recognizing when it is that someone some self declared leader in, I can't remember it was like the the types of things that they are saying the invitation to possible members says the scheme is strictly for those in the quote, worlds of music, entertainment, food, beverage, and cannabis. So self styled are simply PR hacks for any of these industries for some forbid any of these industries. gets to you know, pay $2,000 and write pieces that serve the serve that industry serve those corporations. And that's not what Rolling Stone ever was until well today.

**Bret** 42:25

Well, it's also beautiful loophole. All you got to do is get sufficiently stoned and you're qualified right for them which Well, I

**Heather** 42:32

mean, any anyone is qualified Really? You know? Yes. All you have to do is say it's about music, entertainment, food, beverage or cannabis and have $2,000 to spend. Yeah. So and then then rolling stone will sort of kind of call you a thought leader. Why? Because you had $2,000 to spend. That's what makes you a thought leader.

**Bret** 42:51

So there's a question really, but what's driving this? One thing is that these journalistic outlets and you're right, Rolling Stone has been a leading publication. It's had some hiccups in recent years. But you know, Matt Taibbi, for example, has been there and has done tremendous work, reporting on the financial crisis, among other things, Russia gate, etc. But, you know, our best journalists are fleeing to substack Yep. Right. You know, we've got Glenn Greenwald fleeing the intercept. We've got Matt Taibbi on substack I think he may still be at Rolling Stone, but he's partially on substack Sure. Barry Weiss left the New York Times. andrew sullivan is on substack so we have many of our greatest writers there. Yeah. Why? Why wouldn't they be sought after by these major publications in a way that would allow them to, you know, write their own tickets efficiently that they could be under one of these mastheads? The answer is telling the truth is incompatible with the business model that these establishments now have, they are hemorrhaging serious readers because those serious readers aren't interested in hearing the you know, the whether or not joe biden's wristwatch is a Rolex and what that implies about his view of the poor, whatever crazy crap, it's gonna be next, and people are now sourcing their own news that they're paying quite a bit, really, and they should, frankly, the value that you get from signing up with any of those people on substack is incredibly high because they're incredibly insightful. And you know, they're each of them one off and you know, very special cases. So, you know, I think this is a, you know, a ham fisted, crazy attempt to figure out what substack is doing right and try to get a piece of that action, which isn't going to work. But you know, is it the finances that are driving this? You know, is it the attempt to get people to cough up the 2000 bucks because if you get enough of those, maybe it adds up. Is it the attempt to bootstrap some new model of journalism, which obviously it's not journalism is isn't. So anyway, I don't know what's driving and it's so new. I mean, in fact, it's so crazy that when I read it, I thought they were looking for people to pay. And no, that's obviously not what's going on.

**Heather** 45:22

Yeah, no, there. I also had that same misread for, you know, a fraction of a minute. Because it it is that surprising. That Rolling Stone would go down this run.

**Bret** 45:33

Yeah, yeah. So you call that you said they had jumped the shark? I did. And I, it occurs to me that there's something that has always bothered me about that phrase. It's not the same damn shark. They're jumping. They're jumping a shark jumped a shark, they've jumped a shark or they're engaged in shark jumping. I think that works too.

**Heather** 45:53

Well, I mean, given the nature of Hollywood man that there was at the point that happy days that Fonzie infected jumped that original shark. I imagine that they may have actually used the shark that had been used in jaws. So it may it may be, there has been a shark that has been used

**Bret** 46:10

you but you don't metaphorically jump a literal shark? That's probably true. Yeah, no, I don't think they use that word, that Rolling Stone probably

**Heather** 46:17

up in your head. That same shark, even if you don't recognize that it is the same shark that jaws and Fonzie shark are in fact, the same shark, aren't you in fact, still jumping metaphorically jumping the shark, it's the world's

**Bret** 46:29

only celebrity shark. So there's a good chance if you're jumping a particular shark, it's going to be that one. But on the other hand, the shark that Rolling Stone has jumped here, I believe is just sort of in the general category.

**Heather** 46:42

It's a different shark. Okay. Fair enough. Next topic. So I spent, I spent some time walking around Portland, downtown in the southwest in the Northwest. This week, so pearl district, Northwest district elements district. And what we want to talk about a few things that emerged from that. The second is what has been going on pals lately. And what I saw when I actually went by pals a couple of times in the last week and a half, but the first is really just it's based on two anecdotes, two business owners who might talk to because I walked into their stores, one of whom is going out of business, one of whom is losing her store, and one of whom is doing fine, by her estimation, and I believe it to be true. And they and I actually have both of these conversations yesterday's. So they're geographically close, they are geographically very close. They are demographically very similar, both in terms of the business owners themselves and the businesses. These are both women's clothing stores, and they are women. Actually, I know one of their ages Exactly. And one of them, I'm just guessing they're probably you know, women around around our age through you know, Gen X. And, you know, Ben in Portland for a while, and, you know, small, independent women's clothing boutiques, both of them have been where they are for more than a decade and one case, several decades. In fact, it's being run by the daughter of the woman who originally started it. And that one, the one that's being run by the daughter of the woman who originally started it is going into business, it's closing its doors. It just it's been it's been too many months of hemorrhaging without we know in Middle High rent area without enough sales and you know, part of part of it is that that particular store caters specifically to higher end you know, sort of fancier fancier dress and in an era of Zoom Zoom meetings you know, maybe you need a top once in a while maybe but you know, if you can sell tops and sweatpants it's you know, that that may be the the magic thing. Whereas the other store which is also actually in a slightly lower rent area, but, but just just a few blocks away with that, you know, that's that's the way of many urban areas. The difference between these two stores Other than that, that small difference is, I think that the proprietor, the owner of the store that is doing okay, is not just an entrepreneur and a retailer, she is also a creator and a designer and a maker. So she designs much of the clothing that she sells, and she makes it herself and she employs seamstresses who are also doing some of the making. And

**Heather** 49:41

that you know, when I when I talked to her about it, you know, she attributed her success to being stubborn. She says, you know, when things get tough, I rise to the challenge and I just claw my way out, I fight my way out and there is something to that to, to the value of stubbornness in the face of difficulty, for sure. But I think I would attribute I would put even more of the explanatory power of why it is that she is succeeding where others are not to the fact that she is actually creating something new in the world, rather than, than just, you know, just being a curator and, and a Ana creator of a space where people can come to buy things. And in space in particular, she told me that, you know, last spring when the lockdowns were starting, that's that is the season for her I'd never been in the store before this, that's the season for her when she is beginning to get special orders for you know, spring and summer weddings, for for dresses, presumably for both wedding dresses, and, you know, maybe bridesmaids dresses and just special events dresses, because spring and summer is the time for these, you know, fancy events. And of course, those you know, the ones that she had, that she hadn't started got canceled, they all just you know, went to zero because suddenly these events were no longer able to happen. And it looked really dire there. But she pivoted remember, she's someone who makes things and who employs people as well. And they started making masks. And they started making really high quality masks with layers of filter in them that are comfortable, that are beautiful, they're in a price point that makes sense. And it's not as cheap as you can buy a mask. But they're but they work and she was able to not just keep her store and keep her living but also keep the the women whom she had already been employing employed. Because and you know, she also had an established enough business, she already had a web presence, she already had an Instagram account, she already had all this stuff going. But absent the ability to actually be making things herself designing and making things herself. I don't think the story would have gone that way. And I guess this is this is such a challenging era for everyone. But almost everyone should be able to find something in themselves that is unique that they can bring to to the world. And that that is what everyone should be trying to figure out what that thing is, if they don't already know it, and how is it that they can release in the world, as opposed to relying on supply chains and the words of authority and you know, when am I going to be allowed to do the thing that I was that I was being allowed to do before because it's not reliable. So it

**Bret** 52:25

strikes me that this mirrors something that we frequently said in the teaching context, which is that the in an environment where you don't know what world you're going to graduate into, because things are changing so quickly, it doesn't make sense to, to invest deeply in specific knowledge. What you want to invest in, is a generalist toolkit and specifically tools, that is to say, things that you can apply to whatever world that's likely to be. So as much as much ink has been spilled over learn to code, the thing is, if you know how to code, then you can adapt to whatever world whatever it is that needs to be coded in the world that we find ourselves in. And so this is very much in contrast to the fashion of recent decades, educationally, which has involved, you know, kind of slavish devotion to the job market and, you know, training, it has become increasingly about training and as departed from the the essence of Liberal Arts people are, you know, starting earlier and getting narrower and narrower training rather than broader and broader training. Because what they want is a guarantee they want to train for the job that they really think is going to be there. But then if it shifts a little bit to the right, there's nothing. Yeah. So I think your Your guess is as close to a, you know, controlled comparison as you're going to get in the circumstances. And it tells that same story. And I don't think the two things the tenacity and the flexibility are so different,

**Heather** 54:02

because and yet most people would hear those two things and think that they were inverse somehow, right? Not invert, but like, at least distantly related.

**Bret** 54:11

Right. And in fact, they're directly related. Because to the extent that what you do is figure out how to apply what tools you have to what problems exist, you run up against lots and lots of obstacles, and if your senses This is insurmountable, then you won't be able to wield those tools. But if your senses I know there's a way around this, and I'm going to figure out what it is I'm going to make a prototype and it's going to teach me the next thing that that is the pattern that actually makes you capable of bootstrapping your new role in a hyper Novel World.

**Heather** 54:43

That's right. So also while walking around, I specifically went by pals, which is this this amazing, gigantic independent bookstore in Portland. I in Before times, I would spend a lot of time just just wandering around there. And it's you know, it's so big that you really you kind of have to choose a section. You can't You can't possibly see all of it and and it I don't even know if it got into the news in this last two weeks, I know that we became aware that there were riots outside of it. Because of because of our connection with Andy. Andy. No. So do you want to set this up? Do you want to score what it is that you understood, so happened?

**Bret** 55:35

Most of the people who watch this podcast will know and in fact, I believe Andy was my first guest. Back in the early days of Dark Horse. Andy is a local independent journalist who has been absolutely dogged about revealing what has taken place on the streets of Portland, when the mainstream news was absolutely pretending that it wasn't happening. So throughout the rioting, and he was there, and he was one of the few places you could go to figure out what was occurring in the streets of Portland.

**Heather** 56:10

He's got up he's got a bias. He's got a slant, he's unapologetically conservative, and he sees nothing to recommend what an Tifa are doing. And it's unlikely if they started to doing things, started doing things that were recommendable that he would be the first to notice. But you know what, his biases and he doesn't he doesn't hide it?

**Bret** 56:31

Well, there's, there's more to say here. I think, you know, I would say, Douglas Murray has a bias, but he navigates it in a way that never troublesome, or at least not that I've seen. Andy is not the same. There's some places where Andy has done some things that make me recoil a bit. On the other hand, I would point out that Andy is in a very vulnerable position. He's on the ground, here in Portland, where he is absolutely loathed by his subject, right, as he is looking at the violence on the streets of Portland, they are out to get him his, his murder is being called for in graffiti around downtown, it's really a very difficult situation. At the same time, he is bootstrapping a method of feeding himself. In other words, as there is no niche for the independent journalists on the ground, reporting on a mob that hates him and wants him dead. But he's doing it. And so while on the one hand, I think it is important, you know, to figure out how to keep one's biases out of one's reporting. And I want Andy to do that, I also recognize that he has been able to do what nobody else is able to do, which is to report that this story on the ground consistently, in spite of tremendous danger to him and his family. And so anyway, I'm rooting for, for him to find a model that allows him to, you know, we all have our biases. But if you're a reporter, you got to keep them out of your reporting. Nonetheless, Andy has been reporting the story, he has a book coming out, I believe the title is unmask

**Heather** 58:29

unmasked inside and Tifa is radical plan to destroy democracy. So

**Bret** 58:33

which sounds like absolute hyperbole until you talk to some antiva, folks, and you discover that actually, they'll tell you that they're more likely meaning flags repeatedly in front of the courthouse here.

**Heather** 58:45

And on Inauguration Day, they had another protest saying, I think, you know, fuck Biden. Yeah, you know, they're no more interested in peace now than they were during the Trump era.

**Bret** 58:57

Right and the alignment, you know, people should go back to my discussion with Jeremy Lee Quinn to get the, you know, there is an ancestral relationship between an Tifa and anti racism, which I didn't know. But nonetheless, the confluence of BLM and an Tifa is more or less accidental. And they have now more or less parted company in Portland for, you know, reasons that are easily understood. But in any case, so Andy has the book coming out?

**Heather** 59:27

in like, April, I think something Oh, February. I don't know some

**Bret** 59:30

And wouldn't you know it? And Tifa Oh, no, let's go back to the Inauguration Day. Right. So the Inauguration Day riots here in Portland were actually an attack on the Democratic Party headquarters locally, you know, not symbolic. They broke windows, clearly the same, same violence we see from them routinely. And there were banners in front. That said we are ungovernable right. They are declaring the ugly equivalent of war on the structures that allow us to function as a society they are anarchist even though they claim when we say things like that that we don't know what we're talking about but no by the definite by the self definition of anarchists they meet it

**Heather** 1:00:13

right and just declaring yourself on governable makes the subtitle here, radical plan to destroy democracy. Makes sense. Yep.

**Bret** 1:00:21

Makes sense. So in any case, very important that a guy like Andy with first hand knowledge of this has a book coming out, not at all surprising that the subjects of his book who are not flatteringly portrayed, I don't know how you would flatteringly portray them. But right, you know, he makes no attempt he makes no attempt to he routinely reveals what they're up to how violent it is, and it destroys their narrative that they are responding to federal fascism or whatever. But they don't want that book sold at pauwels books in downtown Portland shocking. I'm terribly surprised that they are against the publication and sale of this book, right. What is shocking is that pauwels has responded to this with something other than a vigorous dispense. Defense of free speech.

**Heather** 1:01:15

Yep. So they have a long thing online pals doesn't response, but the first paragraph and you can, you can show my screen if you want. So Paul's commitment to free speech, dear pals community, at pals, a lot of our inventory is hand selected and hand promoted, and a lot of our inventory is not unmasked by Andy no came to us via one of our long term and respected publishers had chat book group, we list the majority of their catalogue on pals.com automatically, as do many other independent and larger retailers. We have a similar arrangement with other publishers. Since I've just got one more. One more paragraph here since Sunday, pals has received hundreds of emails, calls and social media comments calling for us to remove unmasked from pals.com. Due to protests outside our Burnside location, that's an auxiliary location, we have chosen to close our store including curbside pickup to keep our employees and customers safe. We are monitoring the situation daily and we will reopen when it is safe to do so. Our other locations and website remain open. So it goes it goes on. And it's all this very, very backpedaling, soft, like mealy mouth kind of defense of free speech. And the first day I went down to piles, the main one downtown pearl district, they were closed. And I was shocked. I was I was interested interested to see what it was going to look like there. And presumably because it was closed, there was nothing going on at all, except I was standing there reading the sign on their door when a couple of other women came up behind me and murmured Oh, I wanted to go in I wish it were open. This seeming not to know why they were closed because there's nothing there was nothing on the sign outside the door on the door that explained were closed because a mob came and tried to censor us like try, right like this. This was this is about one of the world's I think biggest independent booksellers responding to cries to not sell a book,

**Bret** 1:03:14

right? And their defense is we didn't pick it, we didn't the catalog, we sell lots of things from catalog, we're

**Heather** 1:03:21

never gonna have hard copies in the store. Don't worry about that, right. And we were like, people can still order it online from us if they if they need to, we wouldn't. But if they need to write certainly you don't want it you know, you can't buy in the store.

**Bret** 1:03:33

And we will reopen when it's safe, effectively giving and Tifa control over when pauwels is open. And when not well, they

**Heather** 1:03:42

were open then a few days ago. And nothing nothing was happening.

**Bret** 1:03:47

Right. But my point is to even say that, yes, it reveals the failure of the full stack here. Because what's really going on, you know, yes, Powell should make a full throated defense of free speech. And it should say, you know, books are bad ideas. We do not vet them in advance, you are more than welcome to purchase a copy of the book, disagree with it in whatever way you wish. And you know, you have numerous freedoms that would allow you to write a vigorous response, which we would also carry blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, right? They could do a lot of things. What's really happened here is the mayor who said one heartening thing about enforcing the law after the election and then basically things have gone back to the way they were beforehand with the kid gloves and all. But because we are not enforcing the law and because a violent group is allowed to attack a bookstore so that it does not carry a book by a journalist who was exposing that very group, right? This is just this is the collapse of civil society. This is not only You don't necessarily have the right to speak, but you are subject to effective violent Editing by exactly those on whom you report. Right. So this is the failure of freedom of the press. It is the failure of our governance structure. Yes, pals is a private entity but our city government is not and it has an obligations to to protect Andi and it has obligations to protect power and pals and if it can't do it here, right? If the city

**Heather** 1:05:32

government do it for pals, then Portland is doomed, right? Like houses is

**Bret** 1:05:37

extremely popular with Portlanders, they are rightly

**Heather** 1:05:41

proud of palace as a main destination for tourists when they were

**Bret** 1:05:45

tourists. Yeah, it is it is one of the shining examples of a brilliant non chain bookstore. And therefore, if Mayor Wheeler were to have the police enforce the law and protect pauwels this is the thing that is most likely to wake people up to where we have where we where we find ourselves, and it's not happening so you're not happy about this? What

**Heather** 1:06:14

if not this what exactly and I guess the the one other thing this made me think about was the nature of episodic behavior. And you know, we spoke a lot during the summer and the early fall when the protests were still happening every night in Portland and they reliably as the sunset became riots. And yet some I don't know how many of them were simply confused and how many of them were intentionally being deceptive but some journalists would say well, here I am at noon I in some random square and I don't see any protests so I guess this is a lie I don't see any riots and the idea that something has to be happening at all times everywhere in order to be happening at some time somewhere is obviously a ridiculous proposition. And if you say it that way it's revealed but somehow most people can't keep that very simple fact in their head for very long so you know we're we're those protests mostly peaceful well actually in Portland every single night they became they went from peaceful cannot peaceful every single night like clockwork it was actually more like sun work because as the time of the sunset changes, so did the time of the onset of the riots. It was regular it was predictable and all you had to do was be in the quote unquote right place at the quote unquote right time to see what was going on. And if you didn't go there at that time in those places, then you wouldn't see and of course there were actually three or four or five rather locations that the the violence was happening mostly peaceful. Well, you know by some metrics I guess if you want to do the math that way but that's not journalism is it? And you know, this maybe this is totally irrelevant, but I was reminded actually of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy of Douglas Adams fabulous five book trilogy. With regard to the the double entry the earth gets on The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, so if memory serves, it's been a while. Ford Prefect who's actually an alien that has picked the he thinks unassuming name Ford Prefect with which to live on earth for it turns out decades because he misses his he misses ride this ride, right? So he's stuck there, and it be friends Arthur Dent. And the two of them managed to hitch a ride on a vogon spaceship, I think, you know, within minutes of Earth's destruction, and The Hitchhiker's Guide to the galaxies, then both the book that Ford Prefect is writing for, but also to encyclopedic. It's an encyclopedic reflection of all of you know, if you're hitchhiking around the galaxy, where might you go and what might you do in order to drink food? And yes, might you suck on your towel to get nutrients all of this when he was sent to Earth to update the entry, the entry for Earth read harmless, and through didn't have decades of work. He managed to double the length of the entry to mostly harmless I think, mostly harmless accurately describes Earth about as well as mostly peaceful describes the protests and riots have been happening in the US since the end of May.

**Bret** 1:09:23

Yes. I agree with you now that you said Douglas Adams seems to have anticipated this solution moment. Yeah, sorry. He's not here to see Oh, I

**Heather** 1:09:31

am. I am to. Okay, we got two more topics. before we sign off for the week, we want to talk a little bit about the newest iteration of tech censorship that's happening. Mm hmm.

**Bret** 1:09:44

Yes. So this week, our good friend Jim rut and my collaborator in game be back in 2013. I think it was. Before that was before. Well, anyway, Jim Wright, who was the organizer of game B, just to give you a sense of who he is, he is a former head, former chairman of the Santa Fe Institute, which is an academic institute that is dedicated to the study of complexity science. He is a tenacious student of history. He is also this is just a bit of trivia, he is the coiner of the term snail mail. So any case, that's anything on his podcast, I've been on his podcast a couple times. And he is somebody who emerged from the right. And anyway, game B was an effort to figure out how to move civilization into its 2.0 version that involve people from across the political spectrum gathering in Stanton, Virginia,

**Heather** 1:10:53

the idea being that game in which we are all living is failing us in ways that we are beginning to see and will begin to fail every one in ways that we are trying to predict. But whether or not we predicted accurately, we know that it will fail.

**Bret** 1:11:06

Yes, the central idea in game B was that game a is actually vulnerable to competition, it tends to stamp out things that it can't fight. But if you were able to fight it in on a level playing field, a game B that was superior at doing all the things game a claims at once, could could defeat it. Game B, I should say I believe the term was, was the insight of our friend Jordan Hall, who was also a founder of game B. In any case, Jim was thrown off of Facebook this week, he was thrown off curiously in exactly the way that I had been thrown off, I believe he saw, even to the word the same warning that I got, and received the same non explanation of having violated guidelines. And he was told that there was nothing that could be done that there was that review had already been conducted and there was no reversal possible. We of course, raised a stink about this on Twitter, and he has been reinstated to have the mods. The admins for the game be Facebook group, not a group I participate in. But nonetheless, there is a group that discusses game be on Facebook, they were thrown off at the same time.

**Heather** 1:12:30

So Jim and the other two admins, you're all thrown off, and in

**Bret** 1:12:34

the space between my being thrown off and then restored and Jim being thrown off, Jordan had been thrown off Jordan Hall, Jordan Hall. So

**Heather** 1:12:41

this is a his has his account better started,

**Bret** 1:12:45

it has been restored. So this is a fairly clear attack on game B. And the thing that is, I think, most significant here is that we are watching a purge of what we are told is conservatives, that's a very upsetting idea. The idea that that a political belief, a mainstream political belief, like conservatism, is enough to get you thrown off of tech platforms is very disturbing. And that oughta put all of us from across the political spectrum on high alert. But my claim is also not true. It's not true.

**Heather** 1:13:23

That's it's true. And

**Bret** 1:13:27

yes, conservatives are threatened. But really, those who are being thrown off are anybody who is a threat to the power of the ruling elite, which at the moment is overwhelmingly from the blue team. So the blue team is consolidating power by getting rid of things that challenge it. Not only does that include yesterday, M was originally a conservative, I would now say he is extremely progressive. I mean, after all, he was interested in a total revamp of the way civilization works to make it fairer and more functional and safer. That's pretty darn progressive attempt to progress. Right? I also knowing him personally knows that he is in a gala. terian, who holds our deepest liberal values close to his heart. So game be threatened, right? have numerous people associated with game be thrown off of Facebook, the Unity movement was, of course, suspended at Twitter and remain suspended To this day, also not a conservative movement, a non ideological nonpartisan movement. And so it's very clear that what's happening here is power is using weaponry to defend itself against challenge. And to the extent that many people who are not paying close attention and who are signed up with the blue team are going to look past this and not think about it. They're going to turn a blind eye because what they think is happening. They may understand it's unfair, but they think that the cost is going to conservatives. Mmm that is a an oversight that they will soon enough regret. So my suggestion would be follow all of the heterodox voices that you believe are honorable and do so across as many channels as you can so that as we get booted off of one channel, there's some place that we can regroup and in later podcasts, we can talk about some other technologies and approaches that we might use in order to protect ourselves from an onslaught that we may only be able to stave off very briefly

**Heather** 1:15:32

coming soon. I hope, this particular conversation that you're alluding to Yes, awesome. Okay, one more thing. And show my screen Zack, this is from the Oregon Coronavirus update the the newsletter that I get as a citizen of Oregon that I signed up for, from the Oregon Department Human Services, January 21. That's two days ago as we are speaking, we have this headline vaccine voices, I trust the science and the data is phenomenal. I'm going to read the first sentence only. Anna antonopoulos. a pediatric hospitalist in Medford shares her vaccination story, quote, I got my COVID-19 vaccine to protect my patients, my friends, my family and myself. I've dedicated my life to helping others around me whether that is treating patients in the hospital teaching Sunday school at church, being a super aunt to my five nieces and two nephews. And just being a good neighbor and friend, getting my vaccine is an extension of this. I want to be an example. I trust the science and the data is phenomenal. I was so excited to get my vaccine. She is making a public health pronouncement. Which is that being a good neighbor means that you should seriously consider getting the vaccine. And that may well be true. That is different. Public Health is different from what is the science? What do the science scientific results actually say? And the quote that this begins with I trust the science and the data is phenomenal. Again, I'm going to get a little semantic here and say but that shouldn't read is the data are phenomenal.

**Bret** 1:17:23

The singular being datum. Yeah, we're

**Heather** 1:17:26

data are. But we talked last week about there being I think it was last week, a death and there have been a few that seem to be the result of this vaccine. But there are many millions of doses of vaccine that have been have been given. And, you know, it's an error just as it is with COVID to only talk about deaths. But if you just look at the the death rate, the you know, the rate of deaths that we really think could be attributable to the vaccine, it's tiny, and there will always be some risk. And those deaths do not in and of themselves really suggest any reason to be particularly skeptical of this vaccine at all. The fact is, and we've said this over and over and over again, that given that the technology with which the two main vaccines that are being deployed in the US, the mRNA vaccines by Pfizer, and Madonna, are brand spanking new, that we simply cannot have access to data that suggest long term safety, those data cannot possibly exist. The data are phenomenal. What data, the data on what has happened in the weeks to coming on, you know, almost a month now of many, many people getting this vaccine. so far. So good, great, really hope it stays that way. But claiming that you should trust the science and following that immediately with the data are phenomenal, is disingenuous at best. You. You just can't get there from

**Bret** 1:19:04

here. Yeah, I fully agree with you. The data can't be phenomenal, because they simply cannot cover one of the very important issues, which is what is the long term impact of this on the physiology of those who have taken the vaccine. Hopefully, it's a negligible effect. But we can't know that yet. And pretending that we do know it is is unacceptable. I would also say that this is embedded in a landscape where the data generation mechanism is itself captured. Yeah. And that is very troubling because even when the data do seem to suggest a rosy outcome, one cannot be certain whether or not that is what the data say because that's actually the consequence or because the economic pressure and economic pressures that come from generating vaccines like this enough for profit context have steered the journals have caused a, you know, selection of some data over others, because they paint a rosier picture. I'm not saying that has happened, but we have seen indications of it. And we've covered them here on the podcast. The fact is, this is not a clean system. And if the next time this happens, we want to be able to dare to say what it is that the the data indicate, then we need to clean up that system. So that in fact, we can say, you know, okay, we still wouldn't know what the long term impact was, but at least we'd be able to say, with some confidence that an objective analysis says X, Y, or Z, and at this moment, we don't have that because the whole system is driven by perverse incentives.

**Heather** 1:20:44

Yeah. And it renders pronouncements by any and all health officials pretty much suspect. And you know, we should always be encouraged remain skeptical of pronouncements that we have not ourselves verified, or had people whom we have come to trust, go in and assess those statements, in this case, over and over and over again. And I feel like we're beginning to sound like a broken record here. But over and over and over again, we get health professionals of some stripe, who have been asked to make a statement, which basically demonstrates to all the plebes all of us out here why it is that we need to take this and there is, you know, the best possible gloss that I can put on this is that there is an intentional fuzzing of the actual distinction between what could the science possibly say about safety and efficacy of this vaccine versus what is the right public health move for as many people as possible to do. And those two things. It's great when they're exactly in concert, they often will not be and the fact is that we deserve as members of democracy to have the information on both fronts. What can we and can we not yet know about safety and efficacy? And what is it that we currently think is the best move from a public health perspective that will allow us to, you know, start having a functioning economy again, as soon as possible? Yes,

**Bret** 1:22:25

well, maybe a couple of final points, we can't say that the data are phenomenal, we can say that they're going to be phenomenal whether or not that actually reflects the, the, the impact of these vaccines on people wire data,

**Heather** 1:22:39

the data are going to be

**Bret** 1:22:42

phenomenal. Okay, and the last thing I would say, though, is that this brings us back around to what we started with, we're talking about the indications out of the very young Biden administration. And we talked about several things that seemed positive rejoining the who

**Heather** 1:22:59

the Paris Climate accords climate accord on the dapple.

**Bret** 1:23:03

Yeah, and I would just say that in each of these two, I think we need to be cautious of the same kind of

**Heather** 1:23:10

the two being the who and the Paris Climate accord.

**Bret** 1:23:13

Yes. So the who, in principle, should the USB in a very active member of the who, sure, but there's a question about whether or not the WHO IS SO compromised by allegiances that in fact, we are stuck in the position of effectively not having a viable who and the fact of Peter dacitic being on the whose task force to determine the origin of SARS, covi to in China is indicative of a deep kind of corruption, right? This is the last person who should be on that committee, and yet, he's there. And so most

**Heather** 1:23:52

positive gloss is at the very least, there's a conflict of interest there, there's a

**Bret** 1:23:57

conflict of interest, and it may be driving. And so if that is the case, then the fact that symbolically it makes sense to participate in the world's mechanisms for navigating health issues and things like that is in conflict with what the hell are we going to do once the mechanisms are captured, we're going to have to do something unusual. With respect to the Paris Climate accords, I would say symbolically speaking, this is great, of course, we should be party to global accords on managing resources like the atmosphere and protecting us from heat accumulation. On the other hand, it ain't a solution, right? It's more or less symbolic at the level of its effectiveness. And if we were ever going to get to something useful, we would have to have a very frank global discussion, and that would include figuring out, you know, what parts of these models actually indicate something How can you validate them rather than pretending that because the computer says if something's going to happen, that it is what other data can we rely on in order to calibrate our belief or lack of belief in the models etc. So

**Heather** 1:25:00

can we promote international efforts for actual alternative energy etc. Right.

**Bret** 1:25:05

And with respect to dapple? I would say, I was very much not in favor of this pipeline. I don't like it. But

**Heather** 1:25:14

I mean, you were you protested against it. Yeah, I did. But back in whenever that was, like

**Bret** 1:25:20

2016 2016, it would have been. But I want to know what the alternative is. And I want a net analysis, right? The idea of we're not going to do this, because our constituents don't like it is not good enough. The answer is, well, what are we going to do? And you know, so I'm not interested in the shell game, where we pay attention to the symbolism over here, and we don't check out the net effect of the policy change. So in all of these cases, I would say, I remain to be convinced. And we have to move beyond symbolism. And, you know, political corruption and regulatory capture are two of the biggest stories of our era. And we were gonna have to find our way out of the very deep hole they've dug for us.

**Heather** 1:26:09

Indeed, well, I think that brings us too, near the end of one more hour.

**Bret** 1:26:15

So this here is near the end of the first hour of the Dark Horse podcast.

**Heather** 1:26:20

Yeah, the first the first hour. So we will be after a few announcements here taking about a 15 minute break. And then for those of you listening, we will be back next week. For those of you watching, if you care to join us in about 15 minutes for our live stream q&a. You can ask questions via Super Chat now or in the next hour. And if you are interested in joining a monthly private q&a that we do on the last Sunday of every month, you can join my patreon to Heather hying Patreon. And right now, actually, is the 48 hour window of opportunity to ask questions, we don't get to all the questions that are asked. But we get to for a number of them. And it's an intimate enough community that we're able to look at the chat as it happens and engage with people who were there live. And if you are on the Patreon and you don't see it live, we leave it up for you watch it in a moment. So if you joined at the $11 level right now, you could ask question that your Patreon Brett, the first Saturday and Sunday of every month you have a two hour conversation or our private q&a is two hours and you have private conversations.

**Bret** 1:27:29

Yes, there's a Saturday one on questions of good governance coalition of the willing and a Sunday one on evolutionary dynamics. Sometimes there's overlap between these things. Sometimes they're very distinct, but in any case, they're both very lively, good discussions, so consider joining them.

**Heather** 1:27:48

Excellent. We have we have shirts and mugs and stickers and such for sale at store dot Darkhorse podcast.org we try to put something new up at least once every month. We've only been doing it for two months, but you know, I'm thinking the data are gonna be phenomenal potato

**Bret** 1:28:06

p phenomenal thing.

**Heather** 1:28:10

You can email Darkhorse moderator@gmail.com for logistical questions like how do I pose a question? Although if you're listening right now, and you wonder that again, Super Chat via YouTube, and oh, then another benefit of joining either a Patreon has access to the discord server. And

**Bret** 1:28:27

so I guess one more thing, yeah, we are sooner or later going to need some kind of artists to do various cartoons and things. If you are a person with such skills, please get in touch with our moderator and maybe send them a sample of your work. Because we have gotten to the limit of our drawings skills, in my case are incredibly limited.

**Heather** 1:28:53

So again, Dark Horse dot moderator@gmail.com. Yeah, we're interested in, in working with an illustrator you can do obviously representative line drawings. I could do a few things, but not that much.

**Bret** 1:29:09

All right. Well, thanks for joining us, everybody. We will see those of you watching on YouTube in 15 minutes

**Heather** 1:29:14

and get outside. Yeah, you will